

## Kerry Hills Farm Shear Delight and Comfort



Kerry Hills Farm makes natural wool bedding products for sale on the Internet. Heading up this interesting business is Susan McCourt who stumbled into this thriving business in a quite interesting way and fell in love with what she is doing. Susan says, "I was meant to do this."

Susan's occupation, before moving to the farm, was a very fast-paced one in the corporate world. Susan worked as a wholesale drug representative with her own territory. In fact, she was the first woman to have her own territory. After twenty years of the "corporate world", Susan was looking for a quieter life. She wanted a home in the country with enough land so she could be secluded from neighbors to obtain the peace and quiet she was seeking. Susan found just what she was looking for amid the rolling hills of Ashippun in Dodge County Wisconsin in the form of a beautiful 35-acre farm she christened Kerry Hills Farm. Susan moved to the farm in February of 1997.

She settled into her new homestead and was working as an insurance sales person out of her home. One thing she had not figured into the mix was that as lovely as the lush pastures were when she moved in, by August they were way overgrown. While in Door County visiting a cousin, she received an unexpected gift of two lambs from him. Unknown to Susan at the time, this was the beginning of her business of raising sheep and selling wool in the form of quilt products. The lambs kept the pastures mowed and also worked their way into Susan's heart.

Susan purchased more sheep and a ram which led to even more sheep. Now having a flock to tend, she had to learn all about caring for her flock and found she really enjoyed it. One of the things she learned was that sheep have to be sheared and when they are, she has a lot of wool on her hands. While trying to figure out what to do with the wool, she remembered back to the days she visited her great-grandparent's home and used to sleep on a rope-tie bed lined with a fleece bunk. She recalled how comfortable this was and it became the inspiration for the Soothe Ewe™ Underquilt.

Susan made her first underquilt (from the wool from her flock) on the floor of her living room and after sleeping on it, she noticed a relief of her neck and shoulder pain, along with general relief of her aches and pains. This motivated her to do research about the medical benefits of wool. She found out that wool has a natural resilience as a result of the crimps found in each wool fiber. This creates a natural weight-support system. Wool also delivers therapeutic warmth that works together with the body to temporarily relieve pain and stiffness by relaxing sore, tight muscles and conforming to the contours of the body to help you fall asleep.

When Susan realized that her wool would help relieve sleep disorders and muscle pain, she quit her insurance sales job and was off and running and began her business in 1999. In November of 2004, SBA was able to assist Susan with a 7(a) loan to help in the expansion of her business.

Susan's products consist of the complete Surround Ewe™ Sleep System as well as, Soothe Ewe™ Underquilt, Snuggle Ewe™ Comforter, Hug Ewe™ Pillows and more. Each product produced by Kerry Hills Farm is handmade, produced in the workshop next to the house. Susan takes great pride in her natural fiber products, carefully hand making each to the client's satisfaction. The wool is cleaned with a gentle organic soap and no harsh dyes or chemicals are used. All sales are made through Susan's website at [www.kerryhillsfarm.com](http://www.kerryhillsfarm.com). People can also visit the farm to see the products and then order them on the website. To arrange a visit to the farm to see the products call Susan at 800-474-4553.

SBA is extremely proud to have been of assistance to this amazing entrepreneurial businesswoman in the success of her business. It amazes this writer the way Susan created a new career for herself completely from scratch to learn all she needed to know about the business she virtually fell into, applying that knowledge, and utilizing her past experience and skills to make this business a success. I visited the farm, met Susan and tried out the products. Susan's patented product line is like resting on a cloud that cushions your entire body. Doctors are prescribing it, insurances are paying for it, and it is also Medicare eligible. Once you meet Susan, you can tell she truly loves what she does. It is evident in her interaction with her animals, when she calls her flock, they come running to her and when she nears her horses, they neigh and nuzzle her and vie for her attention. Her interaction with her workers is one of mutual respect and friendship and she says, "They know that the work needs to be done and they do it".

Susan exemplifies the word "entrepreneur" in the purest sense and proves, once again, that the American dream of owning your own successful business is alive and well and that we can find and accomplish the best in ourselves when we least expect it. She is dedicated to what she is doing and will tell you that once she let her spirit go to the land and her animals, everything else fell into place. Susan's long-range goal is to have the farm pay for itself by the time she retires and she is well on her way to accomplishing that goal.